DOCUMENT RESUME

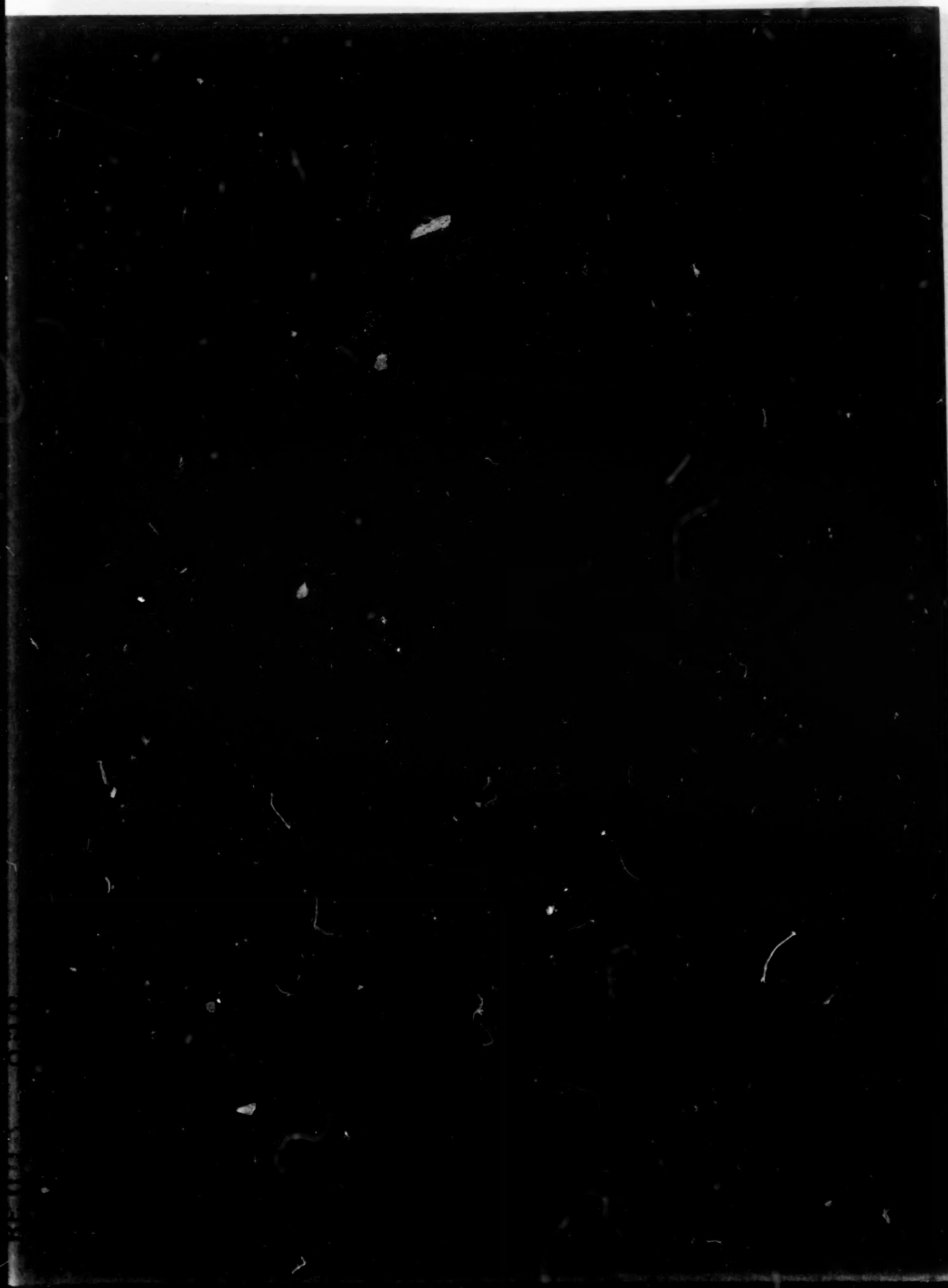
ED 055 747 RE 003 858

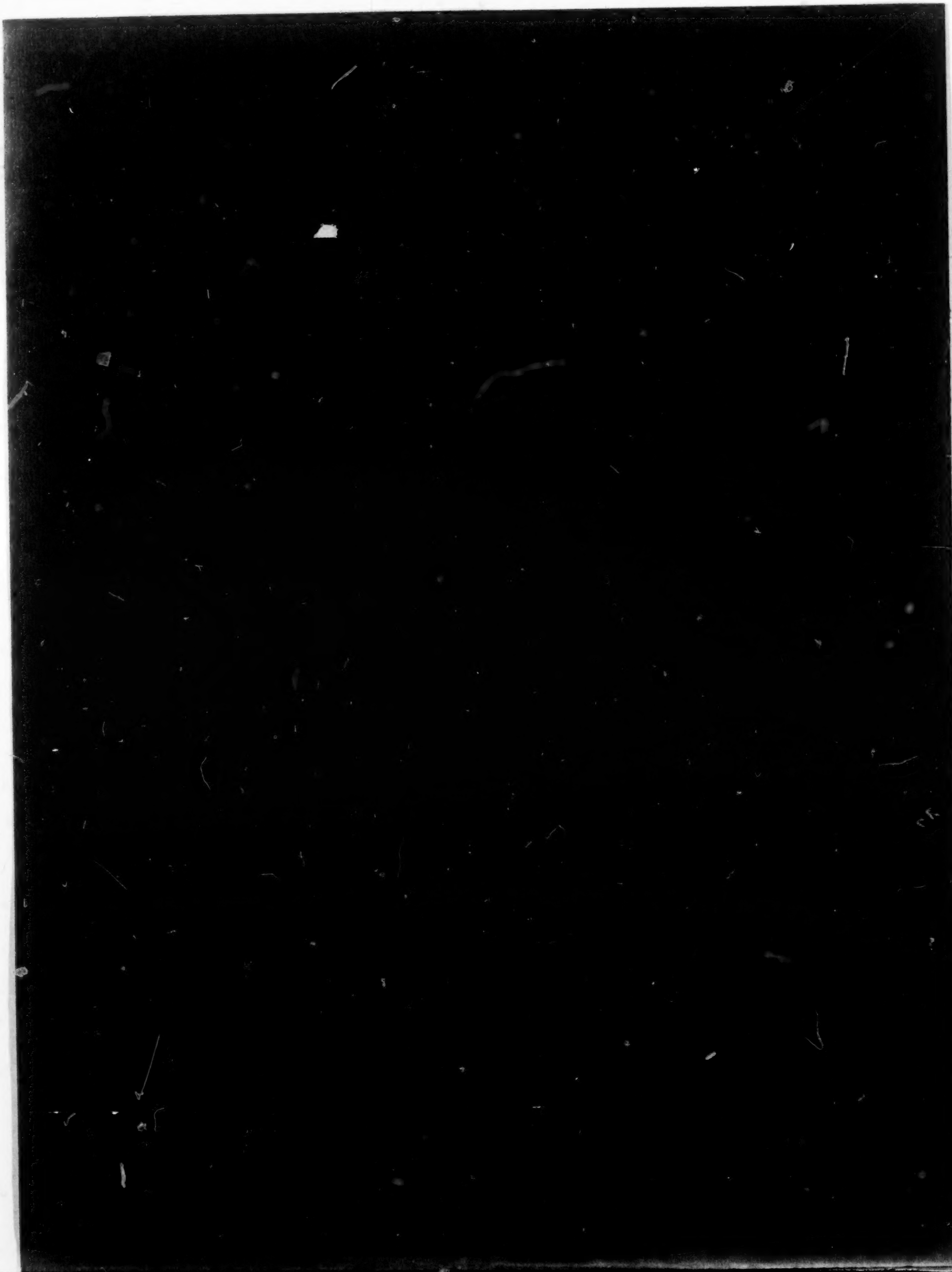
AUTHOR Johnson, Shelby L.
TITLE Quality Verification of the Regional Resource File for the Wisconsin Design for Reading Skill Development.
INSTITUTION Southeastern Education Lab., Atlanta, Ga.
REPORT NO SEL-TR-6
PUB DATE Jun 71
NOTE 31p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Field Studies; *Instructional Design; Instructional Materials; Questionnaires; *Reading Materials; *Reading Skills; *Resource Materials; School Involvement; *Skill Development; Southern Schools; Teacher Response

ABSTRACT

One component of The Wisconsin Design for Reading Skill Development--The Teacher's Resource File: Word Attack--was adapted to the needs of seven field test schools in the Southeastern United States. The resultant product was a 96-page Regional Resource File Supplement to the basic Teacher's Resource File: Word Attack. The file contains two parts: (1) a compendium which keys specific page number references of commercially prepared books, records, films, and other materials to 45 word attack skills and (2) descriptions of classroom activities teachers had found helpful in skill instruction. Since there was almost no agreement in the textbooks series used in the seven schools and those already keyed in the Resource File, extensive adaptation was made in a 3-day teacher workshop session in July. The following April, a questionnaire was sent to one-third of the teachers to receive feedback on the accuracy and usefulness of the file. Most teachers found the file to be useful, some inaccuracies were reported, and constant revision was generally accepted as necessary. The survey questionnaire is included in the appendix. (AW)





ED055747

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This publication was prepared by the Southeastern Education Laboratory, Atlanta, Georgia, and is one of several products of the Communication Skills Program that are available from the Laboratory. Some of these publications include:

The First-Year Field Test of the Wisconsin Design for Reading Skill Development, Technical Report No. 5.

Regional Supplement to the Word Attack Resource File for the Wisconsin Design for Reading Skill Development (for participating schools only)

SEL/Project Language, Level II, Kindergarten, Volumes I and II; Teacher's Handbook; Pupil's Book; Criterion-Referenced Test

To all of the individuals who participated in the development of this final report, I wish to acknowledge the sincere appreciation of the Board of Directors.

Kenneth W. Tidwell, Executive Director
Southeastern Education Laboratory

QUALITY VERIFICATION OF THE REGIONAL RESOURCE FILE

FOR THE

WISCONSIN DESIGN FOR READING SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Technical Report No. 6

Shelby L. Johnson

June, 1971

Southeastern Education Laboratory
3450 International Boulevard
Atlanta, Georgia 30354

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INTRODUCTION

This report concerns one effort of the Southeastern Education Laboratory to serve its mission: to alleviate educational disadvantage in the Southeast by improving the school achievement of disadvantaged children. In addition to developing educational products to serve this end, the Laboratory:

1. annually scans the national scene to identify products developed outside the region but apparently with great potential for meeting the needs of children here possibly through careful adaptation,
2. seeks cooperative arrangements with the developers of such products for field testing them in the region,
3. maintains a network of linkages with various regional agencies in order to assure access to local schools for the field tests and assistance in conducting them,
4. field tests each product with the continuing advisory service of the developer, to insure a trial that meets both the spirit and letter of the developer's specifications.

In view of these Laboratory interests and the fact that the Wisconsin Research and Development Center for Cognitive Learning has developed several products with great promise in serving

the Laboratory's mission, a cooperative Laboratory/Center agreement to field test one of the Center's products seemed natural.

In the spring of 1970 the Laboratory and the Wisconsin Center established the framework for a cooperative field test of a Center product in selected schools of the Southeast. The Word Attack element of the Wisconsin Design for Reading Skill Development had already been pilot tested in many schools necessarily close to the Center and was ready for field testing in other areas of the country, with different student and teacher populations and under less rigorous scrutiny. Seven schools in Alabama, Florida, and Georgia were chosen to participate in the 1970-71 field test of the Word Attack element, coordinated by the Laboratory as part of its Communication Skills Program. A description of the schools and a detailing of the field test procedures are included in SEL's Technical Report No. 5, The First-Year Field Test of the Wisconsin Design for Reading Skill Development.

The present report documents the continuing efforts of SEL and of the cooperating teachers to adapt one component of the Design, the Teacher's Resource File--Word Attack, to the needs of the seven regional schools. It also reports the feedback from teachers in frequent contact with the regional supplement of the Resource File as to its accuracy and usefulness.

THE RESOURCE FILE IN CONTEXT

A complete system for individually guided education has been under development for several years at the Wisconsin Center. The Wisconsin Design for Reading Skill Development (hereafter called the Design), one curriculum component of this larger system, provides the structure for a system of individually guided reading in grades K-6. In its prototype form, the Design has been tested in several Wisconsin schools over the years.[1]

The developers have organized reading skills into six broad areas: Word Attack, Comprehension, Study Skills, Self-Directed Reading, Interpretive Reading, and Creative Reading. Collectively, the various materials produced for each area represent a systematic effort to:

1. state explicitly (a) the basic reading skills, which by consensus, are essential for competence in reading, and (b) corresponding behavioral objectives for each skill
2. assess skill development with criterion-referenced tests
3. provide a framework for instruction, using a variety of procedures and instructional materials

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[1]Askov, Eunice N. Assessment of a System for Individualizing Reading Instruction, Technical Report No. 117, Madison: Wisconsin Research and Development Center for Cognitive Development, 1970.

4. provide a management system for planning instruction, grouping children with common skill needs, and monitoring their learning progress.[2]

Presently the Word Attack element is fully developed and has been pilot tested. Terminal and interim objectives have been stated as well as 45 carefully sequenced specific behavioral objectives. These objectives are divided into four levels--A, B, C, and D--which correspond in general with most reading programs in grades K-3. The materials which have been produced for the Word Attack area are:

1. Rationale and Guidelines, an overview of the Design, written for central office personnel, principals, lead teachers, and reading specialists,
2. Teacher's Planning Guide, an abridged version of the Rationale and Guidelines, intended for teachers who will be implementing the Design,
3. Teacher's Resource File, a compilation of some commercially published instructional materials and teacher-directed activities which have been keyed to the Word Attack skills,

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[2]Mary Quilling, Field Test Plan: The Wisconsin Design for Reading Skill Development: Word Attack Element, Madison: Wisconsin Research and Development Center for Cognitive Learning, 1971; also Wayne Otto and Eunice Askov, The Wisconsin Design for Reading Skill Development: Rationale and Guidelines, Minneapolis, Minnesota: National Computer Systems, Inc., 1970.

4. Wisconsin Tests of Reading Skill Development, criterion-referenced, paper-and-pencil tests for assessment of skill mastery, (either hand or machine scorable),
5. Pupil Profile Cards, a list of all Word Attack skills, with a procedure for recording skill mastery and for skill grouping.

Since our present concern lies with the Resource File, a discussion of its purposes and history, and a more detailed description of its content and format may be helpful. The existence of the Resource File reflects the third overall intention of the Design: to provide a framework for instruction, using a variety of procedures and instructional materials. Subsumed under this general objective are the dual purposes of the Resource File itself: (1) to provide an index to some commercially produced materials and a source for teacher-directed activities, and (2) to serve as a model for local efforts to organize and index available materials. Intentionally, to permit flexibility, the Design itself does not include textbooks, student books, filmstrips, and so on, for elementary classroom use. Instead, the materials used for skill instruction are those already present in the school that is implementing the Design. The Resource File attempts to solve the problem of applying effectively a variety of books and materials--different for each school--toward the specific objectives stated in the Design. By doing so, it makes the Design adaptable to local needs, interests, and financial means.

The present Resource File represents a merging of two components that teachers in the early stages of Design development thought would be most useful. One was a Compendium which keyed commercially produced materials to the stated objectives; the other was descriptions of classroom activities that teachers had found helpful in skill instruction. For each of the 45 Word Attack skills the Resource File presents a list of references--book titles followed by the exact numbers of the pages to which the teacher can turn for material to use in teaching the skill. Filmstrips, tapes, records, and charts are also keyed to specific skills. Separate, single-sheet pages carry explanations of classroom activities directed toward the skill.

The format of the Resource File used in this year's field test was designed to allow additions at the local level to be made more easily than could be done with the staple-bound Compendium. Large envelopes, open at the top for insertion of single pages, are kept in two three-ring vinyl binders, Volume 1 for Levels A and B, and Volume 2, for Levels C and D. On the front of each envelope is printed the skill objective (sometimes more than one per envelope) and a list of books, each title followed by the numbers of the pages containing material relevant to the stated skills, Inside the envelopes are single-sheet pages with classroom activities not having a published, easily referenced source.

The Resource File is intended to be a dynamic, ever-growing element of the Design. New references are to be added as new materials arrive at the school; old references found to be relatively useless in actual classroom practice are to be deleted. As the needs of the children change, so will the types of materials required to meet those needs. Continual updating of the Resource File, keying those materials to the skills, is imperative for effective implementation of the Design's individualized reading program.

A REGIONAL SUPPLEMENT

Prior to the Design's field test in the region, its Resource File had been keyed to the needs and resources of schools elsewhere. Thus, two early tasks of SEL personnel were (1) to identify the extent to which the Resource File was already geared to the needs of the Southeastern field test schools, and (2) to supplement the Resource File, as needed, in order to focus it upon these schools' needs.

To carry out the first of these tasks, at the very beginning of the Laboratory's involvement with the schools, the list of books already keyed in the Resource File was checked against lists of the books predominantly in use in each of the seven schools. These lists were submitted by the lead teacher or principal, and each person was asked to name the two reading series used most often in his school (a total of 14 "most used" series or publishers). Of the 14 responses only one was identical to a textbook series already keyed by Center staff and their cooperating teachers. This meant that the Resource File, as it arrived at the schools in the beginning of the school year, would be helpful (as an index) mainly to those who reported using some of the keyed series as supplements to their major reading program. In addition, agreement among the seven schools as to which series were used most often was relatively low. Of the nine publishers or series mentioned, only two were indicated by more than one school.

Clearly, a great deal of work would have to be done to adapt the Resource File to the seven schools with their diversity of referencing needs. The materials mentioned as being used most often would need to be keyed to the Word Attack objectives. In addition, many schools would want to include supplementary materials which they had found useful in certain situations.

Two factors influenced the decision to hold a special Resource File Workshop. One was the unfamiliarity of school staff with the Design and hence the need for training, at least at a general level, before referencing could begin. The second was the lack of time, together with the great amount of material needing to be keyed to the skill objectives.

Nine teachers participated in a three-day workshop, July 20, 21, and 22, 1970, held in Atlanta at the Laboratory. Each was told to bring a specific set of materials so that there would be no duplication of effort. After a brief overview of the Design and specific directions as to how to record references in a standard format and how to proceed with keying the materials, the teachers began the task of reviewing nine series, nearly 75 separate volumes, some rather lengthy and others relatively brief. By the end of the third day all referencing of materials available at the workshop was completed; some supplementary references were mailed in after the teachers had returned home.

The product of the workshop was a 96-page regional supplement to the Resource File. Entries were typed and printed on

single sheets, easily inserted into the envelopes. Each school received as many copies as it had Resource Files, i.e., at least one per grade or one for every four teachers.

During the year, schools were encouraged to continue the process of keying by reviewing familiar supplementary materials that were impractical to bring to the workshop and by adding new materials as they arrived. These recent references were sent to the Laboratory, compiled, typed, and printed in a 67-page second supplement which was sent to the schools in March, 1971. These two supplements and later additions have been combined into one Regional Supplement to the Resource File for the Wisconsin Design for Reading Skill Development: Word Attack.

SURVEY AND RESULTS

To learn how the Resource File, as regionally supplemented, was actually being used in the schools and what suggestions teachers had for improvement, a questionnaire was developed by SEL staff and sent during the second week of April to one-third of the teachers in each of the seven schools, randomly selected (N=28). All 28 responded.

The 15 items of the questionnaire (see Appendix) were varied in format: 5 were scaled; 4, free response; 1, ranking; and 5, miscellaneous. Each item was designed to contribute some information to one of the two basic questions: (1) Is the Resource File being used according to procedures suggested in the Rationale and Guidelines? and (2) What improvements could be made to increase its usefulness and to improve its format? In regard to question #1, the items fell into two categories corresponding to the dual purposes of the Resource File. One category concerned its use as a source book of commercial materials and teacher-directed activities; the other concerned its use as a model for continuous ongoing local referencing.

AS A SOURCE BOOK

Questions related to the frequency with which teachers made use of the Resource File revealed that 20 of the 28 referred to it "frequently at the beginning of skill grouping and throughout the two- or three-week period." The rest reported using it only at the beginning of skill group instruction or on occasion.

Typically, the teachers used the Resource File a total of 5 or 6 times in 4 weeks of school though responses on the exact count varied from 1 to 11 times.

Judging the accuracy of the references, 24 teachers found them accurate "most" or "practically all" of the time; 3 estimated 50 percent accuracy; and 1 person found it inaccurate most of the time. That a majority considered the listings accurate was substantiated by teachers' responses to the question: About how many times have you located materials through the Resource File and found them not appropriate for the skill you were teaching? Although the range of responses was from 0 to 6, the average was low, 1.8.

As to the usefulness of the Resource File, 3 teachers thought it to be "indispensable"; 20, "highly useful"; and 4, "somewhat useful". None found it "useless" or "not very "useful". At its present stage of development the Resource File refers teachers mainly to commercially published books; proportionately, there are few suggestions for teacher-directed activities. Yet respondents ranked teacher-directed activities from the Resource File as the type of teaching material most frequently used in the classroom. Next in favor were materials which the teacher herself had created. Lessons from textbooks and student worksheets followed, with multimedia materials being used least frequently.

AS A MODEL

The second category of items designed to answer question #1 pertained to the potential usefulness of the Resource File in serving as a model for ongoing local work. All schools made an effort to add new references to the Resource File although some were more diligent than others. Four schools reported using the same procedure for keying materials: teachers share responsibility for keying but submit their references to one person who compiles them and inserts them in the folders. In one school all responsibility for keying and compiling rested with one person, who received occasional suggestions from other teachers. Teachers from each of the remaining two schools held differing views as to the exact procedure being used in their school for the addition of new references. Their responses were scattered among the five possibilities.

One teacher said that she had been responsible for more than 10 new listings to the Resource File, while 7 added between 5 and 10 references, 8 added 1 to 5 references, and 9 supplied no new references. Approximately two-thirds of the teachers sampled, then, had an active part in contributing to the growth of their Resource File.

Throughout the year many schools ordered and received new classroom materials appropriate for reading skill instruction. To get an estimate of the percentage of these materials which

were keyed to skill objectives and added to the references, teachers were asked to list the titles of the new arrivals and then to check those which they had entered in the Resource File. In cases where one person was responsible for adding new references, that person responded to this question. Altogether, 33 titles were listed but only one person indicated that any on her list had been included in the Resource File. Direct observation showed that new materials actually were being keyed as they arrived at the schools. Apparently, the directions for this questionnaire item were not clear, and teachers skipped it.

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

Free response questions on improvement of the Resource File, either in content or format, elicited suggestions from 17 of the 28 teachers. Two responses, however, were irrelevant to the questions, and one was too brief to be interpretable. As expected, the nature of the suggestions varied widely, but three main ideas did emerge. Several teachers felt strongly that a Resource File should be placed in each classroom to provide easier access to the folders. Apparently, the existence of a single copy for each grade at times proved inconvenient.

The second major suggestion concerned a plea for constant updating and revision of entries and for the inclusion of ideas and materials from each teacher. Inaccurate references should be deleted, and more materials added, especially for certain skills, like rhyming words, for which few commercial materials

are available. The implied need here is for more teacher-made materials. This relates to the third suggestion, one mentioned in 50 percent of the responses. That is the need for varied media, especially teacher-directed activities, and preferably activities in a game format for small or average-sized groups. This need corresponds to the teachers' reporting that this type of teaching situation is preferred above all others, even though a sufficient amount of materials was not already available. Teachers felt that they relied too heavily on textbooks and worksheets and that more suggestions for games and small-group activities would be advantageous.

DISCUSSION

Reviewing the questionnaire responses of 28 teachers, or one-third of those involved in the field test, one would conclude that, with few exceptions, the Resource File is being used according to procedures suggested in the Rationale and Guidelines. Those teachers who reported low frequency of use (less than once a week) also indicated that they referred to it only at the beginning of each new skill grouping period; one might assume that all materials are noted at that time and that there would be no need to refer again to the Resource File until the next grouping period. Or, less positively, perhaps these teachers felt no need to refer to a central source for materials. Teacher's opinions about its usefulness were all positive since no one rated it "not very useful" or "useless," even the individual who, at another time, found references "inaccurate most of the time." Some inaccuracies were expected, and teachers for the most part accepted revision as a necessary procedure. In fact, in one school all references to what was once considered a basic text for that school only were deleted in the final edition of the regional supplement; the ethnicity of the student population had changes so dramatically that this particular approach was no longer appropriate.

Teachers overwhelmingly favored teacher-directed and teacher-made activities over lessons from textbooks or

student worksheets. The Resource File should be responsive to the desire for interaction with small groups of children by providing more directions and ideas for learning games. Moving further in this direction, the final regional supplement offers approximately 30 teacher-directed activities among the references. Information gathered from on-site visits indicated that schools who received new materials did key them to the objectives but usually one person was responsible for this. Hopefully, having had one year's experience with the program, teachers will become more involved next year in adding their own book "finds" and activities to the Resource File. Accumulating experiences and references each year and deleting obsolete entries will preserve the dynamic nature of the Resource File and make it increasingly more useful year after year.

APPENDIX

RESOURCE FILE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How would you describe your use of the Resource File?

_____ I refer to it frequently at the beginning of skill grouping and throughout the two- or three-week period.

_____ I use it only at the beginning of a skill grouping period (every two or three weeks).

_____ I refer to it on occasion when I either seem to "run out" of materials or I need something to supplement materials in the classroom.

_____ I do not use it. If you check this item, please mark one of the following reasons:

_____ because my lead teacher or coordinator provides most teaching materials at the beginning of a skill group

_____ because I already have in mind all of the materials we have at my school

_____ other(specify): _____

_____

IF YOU SAID IN #1 THAT YOU DO NOT USE THE RESOURCE FILE, PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION #10 AND CONTINUE FROM THERE. IF YOU CHECKED ONE OF THE FIRST THREE ITEMS OF #1, PLEASE GO ON TO #2.

2. How many times have you used the Resource File in the past four full weeks of school (do not consider vacation weeks)? Circle one or write in the appropriate number.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 _____other

3. How does this frequency compare with your use of the Resource File since the beginning of skill grouping?

Less than usual _____ About the same _____ More than usual _____

19

4. About how many times have you located materials through the Resource File and found them not appropriate for the skill you were teaching?

About _____ times

5. In general, what is your judgment of the accuracy of the references? Put an X on the appropriate vertical line: _____

Inaccurate most of the time	Accurate about half of the time	Accurate most of the time	Accurate practically all the time

6. Check the method which best describes the way in which new additions to the Resource File are made in your school.

_____ One person has the major responsibility for coding and compiling all materials, with occasional suggestions from other teachers.

_____ All teachers share responsibility for coding but submit their references to one person who compiles and inserts them in the File.

_____ All teachers add references to the File independently whenever they locate new materials.

_____ So far no new references have been entered.

_____ Other (specify): _____

_____

7. What instructional materials suitable for skill groups and not already coded in September have you discovered or purchased since the beginning of school?

_____

_____

_____

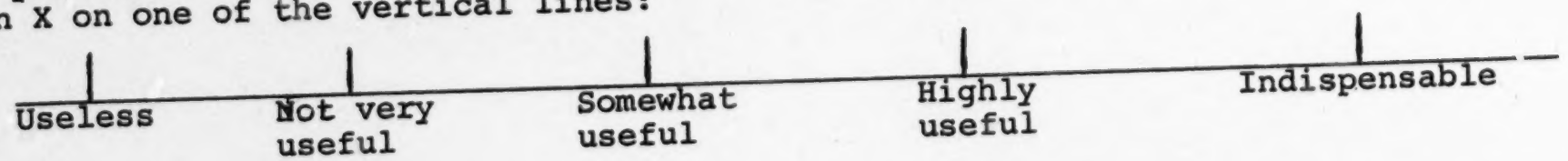
_____

8. Please put a check in front of the materials you listed in #7 which have been coded as completely as necessary and added to the Resource File during the year.

9. Now many new references have you been responsible for adding or suggesting to the coordinator?

None_____ 1-5 _____ 5-10 _____ More than 10 _____

10. How do you feel about the usefulness of the Resource File? Mark an X on one of the vertical lines:



11. What improvements can be made in the Resource File to increase its usefulness?

12. Is the format of the Resource File efficient for your use (slip-out sheets in separate folders)?

YES _____ NO _____

13. How could the format be improved?

14. Please rank the following types of teaching materials according to how frequently you used them in your skill groups. Use 1 for most frequently and 5 for least frequently.

_____ lessons from textbooks

_____ teacher-directed activities from the Resource File

_____ student worksheets

_____ multimedia materials (slides, records, filmstrips)

_____ materials that you yourself made, regardless of type

15. Do you have any other suggestions? Are there comments you would like to make in explaining or elaborating on any of your responses?